3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13



775 suffers sickness or misfortune if an ancestral spirit dies a second death. A person who has bad health says, "The spirit of my grandfather has been caught by *Esuvi*." The name of the good spirit *Osande* is used by a person who is suffering. Such a one says, "I have no more *Osande*." These instances clearly reveal a belief in the dependence of human welfare on the interest of benevolent ancestral spirits.

775 791 753 After a lapse of three months I asked Ngonga again about *Osande* and *Ondele*. He confirmed what he had previously said, but spoke in the plural of these spirits; good spirits are called *Olosande*, bad spirits are called *Olondele*. The medicine-man will visit a hut to foretell the future, and while there he puts a concoction in an image to which he addresses questions. He plugs his nostrils, then in a falsetto voice feigns answers from the image. The father of a family, or possibly the mother's brother, may kill an animal in front of the hut on this occasion. He then says to *Olosande*, "We hope when [761] we kill this there will be no more sickness." The Ovimbundu are afraid of death, and they therefore sacrifice to *Olosande*, asking that there shall be no death in the family.

775 I do not know whether the Ovimbundu distinguish multiple souls as some Negro tribes do. The part of a man which does not die is sometimes called *utima*, which is the word for heart. Dr. M. W. Ennis says that the *utima* and the *omuenyo* are both names of the spirit existing in a living body. Ngonga seems certain that every person irrespective of age, rank, and sex has a spirit, but I could find no evidence that the Ovimbundu visualize a separation of ranks or sexes after death. 762 775 When a man kills himself he is buried near a river so that his spirit will go to the sea, and for the same reason a murdered man is buried near a river. At Ngalangi I inquired from other Ovimbundu people concerning suicide. Women who commit suicide generally do so by hanging or drowning. Men stab themselves in the heart or use a flintlock gun, the trigger of which they pull with their toes. It is feared that the spirit of a suicide will return to induce another suicide in the family, therefore there is anxiety to rid the community of these spirits.

## RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CONDUCT

771 688 The Ovimbundu have many high standards of conduct, some of which have been mentioned in dealing with the education of children. There is, however, no idea of sin. That is to say, there are no commands laid down by some authority which is more than human.

4:Dorsey E-4, 5 (no date)1899 FP13 Mbundu FP13



## THE OCIMBANDA, OR WITCH-DOCTOR OF THE OVIMBUNDU OF PORTUGUESE SOUTHWEST AFRICA.

114 In July of last year the Anthropological Department of the Field Columbian Museum secured an ethnological collection from the Ovimbundu of the Portuguese African province of Angola. The collection was made by Rev. T. W. Woodside, a missionary for seven years among the Ovimbundu, and, on account of its completeness and the full data which accompanied the objects, is of unusual importance and value. Perhaps of chief interest among the series [121] of objects illustrating the various phases of native life in this region is the complete "medicine chest" of a witch-doctor. This I shall describe, making free use of the extensive notes furnished by Mr. Woodside, supplemented by several conversations during which the objects themselves were discussed, and much information furnished concerning the Ovimbundu in general. The collection under consideration was obtained from a single individual, and has seen long use.

101 The Ovimbundu are a southern division of an extensive group of people known as the Bundas, who, in turn, belong to the group of Bantu populations. They occupy the territory of the Bailundu and Bihe plateaus, from Bengualla to the Quanza River, a table-land 4000 to upwards of 6000 feet high, and in south latitude about twelve 142 degrees. The Ovimbundu are described by Mr. Woodside as a dark-skinned people, varying from coffee-brown to quite black, with thick curly hair. They are entirely uncivilized, but are a peaceable, 105 kindly people. Their food is chiefly vegetal, although they possess cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and chickens. They practise polygamy, and the women prepare the food and do nearly all the field work. The men are famous as traders, and journey to the interior for rubber, wax, ivory, and slaves; the latter they secure by purchase from the country of the Lubas. The principal medium of exchange is a cheap cotton cloth which is obtained from white travellers.

791 Among the Ovimbundu, as in nearly all parts of Africa, the 759 witch-doctor is an important personage. He is feared by all classes, and often has more influence and power than the chief himself. Whenever anything is lost or stolen, they apply to the witch-doctor to find out where the object is, or who is the thief. As no one is [761] supposed to die a natural death, the doctor is called in to discover the witch who caused the death. To him they go for all kinds of charms to protect themselves against all evils, or to cast a spell on some one whom they wish to injure; to him they also go for help in

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

In the previous

## THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF VILLAGES

chapter I have indicated that the position of headman is today a somewhat shadowy one, and that the headman emerges rather than succeeds by virtue of various grounds; the main ones being official recognition, some tie to the local chief, the presence of a core of one's kinsmen, a claim to be the first resident, and personality. During my stay Sapapula was as much a headman of Epalanga as anyone can reasonably be these days, yet his position had not always gone unchallenged.

In 1954 he had found himself in danger of being displaced by his matrilateral 'brother' Mwehombo. Both men, apparently, claimed that they had founded the village, both had substantial cores of kinsfolk in the village, and both possessed strong personalities. Sapapula by holding the ministerial title of Epalanga to Kafelo had had a stronger position in village affairs. This prop to his power was taken away when Kafelo was deposed from the chiefdom, and Luanga and Mwehombo purchased the title of Epalanga from Lusase.

In this partnership Mwehombo must have been the leading personality, Luanga being extremely amiable but not at all domineering or energetic. Mwehombo's idea was presumably to establish himself as recognized headman of Epalanga, and to obtain whatever advantages were to be gained from an association with Lusase. Luanga's aim, from what he told me, was to escape contract labour by having a position as a traditional headman and title-holder. Titles will still be sought after, although the substance of power has gone, so long as they can confer some prestige or protection from administrative labour demands. It was not customary for the role of Epalanga to be held by two people jointly.

Mwehombo died shortly after this. He had been baptized by the name of Simon when dying on January 13th 1955, when his social personality began its posthumous career. At the inquest, which was held according to the old Umbundu pattern in which the corpse suspended in a hammock from a pole held by two men was supposed to answer questions by the way it swung, it was found that Mwehombo had suffered the proverbial fate of the sorcerer in being killed by the spirit he had used to kill others.

The role of the questioner was taken by Paulo, sister's son to